

APPENDIX A to East Reserve Project ROD

Comments Received on the Final Environmental Impact Statement

From: Environmental Review
To: Ek, Scott
Date: 12/21/2006 9:35 AM
Subject: Fwd: "East Reserve"

>>> "Bob Lloyd" <LloydB@co.st-louis.mn.us> 12/20/2006 2:16 PM >>>
This is a fine place for a mine. I am all in favor of it.

bob lloyd
21 n erie st
aurora, mn 55705

From: Environmental Review
To: Arkley, Stuart; Ek, Scott
Date: 12/28/2006 11:03 AM
Subject: Fwd: taconite mine near Biwabik

>>> "ken" <klwain@cpinternet.com> 12/21/2006 9:03 AM >>>

Please approve this taconite mine.....the entire area, (Iron Range) will benefit greatly...More jobs, more people, more sales etc...

Ken Wainionpaa Gilbert MN.

And also approve the new mine sites around Hoyt Lakes and Babbitt.....The entire Northern part of St louis and Lake County will benefit greatly.....



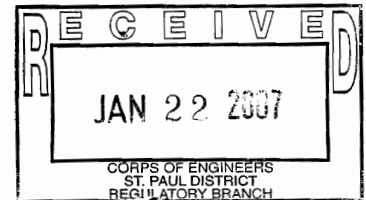
UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

JAN 22 2007

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF
B-19J

Jon K. Ahlness
Regulatory Branch, St. Paul District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
190 Fifth Street East, Suite 401
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1638

Scott E. Ek
Principal Planner
Environmental Policy and Review
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Ecological Services
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4025



RE: Final Environmental Impact Statement Mittal Steel USA-Minorca Mine, Inc.
East Reserve Project CEQ number: 2006525

Dear Mr. Ahlness and Mr. Ek:

I am writing to provide the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) comments on the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. The final EIS is for two new mining pits being proposed by Mittal Steel USA-Minorca Mine Inc. (Mittal). Operation of the mine would include overburden removal and stockpiling, haul road construction, open pit mining, closure and post-closure actions. Over the estimated 18-year life of mining operation, approximately 119 million long tons of ore are expected to be removed from the East Reserve.

Our October 30, 2006 comment letter rated the draft EIS "Environmental Objections-insufficient information (EO-2)." The rating was based on the need for additional information on: wetland mitigation, water quality, asbestos and related fibers, cumulative impact analysis, Tribal rights, and alternatives analysis. We have determined that the responses by your agency to our comment letter have not fully addressed our issues. Our detailed comments follow.

Wetland Mitigation

The final EIS did not include details on the wetland mitigation plan. We understand that detailed information on wetland mitigation plans has already been submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of a wetland permit

application. We recommend that the wetland mitigation plan be included in the Record of Decision (ROD) to support a determination that these impacts have been adequately addressed. We further recommend that the ROD be made available to the public for review.

Water Quality

We understand that key components of the permit compliance schedule will promote the development of data and necessary information to achieve the mercury requirements (1.3 ng/L). Since the 5-year compliance schedule for the NPDES permit coincides with life of the permit, we recommend that Mittal and the State consider shortening the compliance schedule to 2 or 3 years. We are formally requesting a copy of the draft NPDES permit. Please send the copies of the draft NPDES permit to:

George Azevedo
U.S. EPA
Mail Code: WQ-16J
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60604
Phone: 312 886-0143

The Lake Superior Bi-national Program set forth a goal of zero discharge of mercury to the Lake Superior basin by 2020. In 1990, the U. S. and Canadian governments, the states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, and the Province of Ontario announced a Bi-national Program to Restore and Protect Lake Superior. The Program established that Lake Superior would be a Zero Discharge Demonstration Project for nine critical pollutants, including mercury. A timetable was set for interim reduction targets on the path to zero discharge of the critical pollutants by 2020. Mercury reductions were to meet a 60 percent reduction target (from a 1990 baseline) by 2000, 80 percent by 2010 and 100 percent by 2020. Since the proposed mine is located within the Lake Superior Basin, the ROD should address how this proposed mine will affect or be incorporated into the overall goal of zero discharge of mercury by 2020.

Asbestos and Related Fibers

The final EIS concludes that there is little, if any, reason to suspect the ore deposit poses any asbestos-related health concerns. It appears that the final EIS relied on 50-year old data and did not utilize current information on the potential presence of asbestos and related fibers. In a recent study entitled, **"Mineralogy and Morphology of Amphiboles Observed in Soils and Rocks in El Dorado Hills, California"** (Open File Report 2006-1362), the United States Geological Survey did not equate definitions of commercial asbestos properties or lack thereof, with toxicity. The study also stated, "Therefore, a collaborative research effort is needed by the health community, with assistance from experienced mineralogists and analysts, to develop a better understanding of potential health effects of what is currently called "naturally occurring asbestos." In the absence of analytical data to the contrary, we remain concerned that

asbestos and related fibers may be present. A suitable testing protocol for asbestos and related fibers during mining activities has not been included in the development and operation of the proposed mine. We strongly recommend that a protocol for testing be included in the ROD.

The final EIS does not indicate that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has been contacted. MSHA is the Federal agency responsible for protecting worker safety and health associated with mining operations, and it is presently engaged in a proposed rulemaking to tighten its asbestos exposure limits applicable to taconite mines. Your agency needs to coordinate with MSHA to ensure that the required exposure assessments for asbestos are completed prior to the commencement of facility operations. The results of such exposure assessments may indicate a need for engineering controls, such as continued air monitoring for asbestos fiber emissions.

Tribal Rights

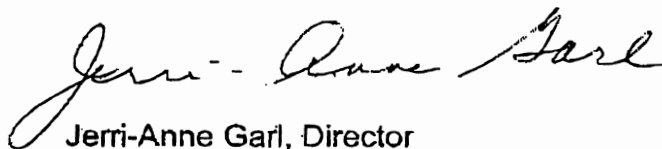
The final EIS provided detailed information on the cumulative impacts to wetlands, wildlife, and water quality. However, the final EIS does not adequately discuss the relationship of mining activities with the potential impacts to tribal resources for hunting, fishing, and gathering under the 1854 Treaty.

Alternatives Analysis

Detailed information on the mining alternatives was not in the final EIS. We recommend that this information on mining alternatives be included in the ROD to substantiate the decision to select open pit mining as the most reasonable option. The final EIS does commit Mittal to minimize the overburden stockpile and to place the material in areas that already experienced adverse impacts. We also recommend that these commitments be included in the ROD and Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit decision.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the final EIS for this project. Based on our review, we still have outstanding issues that should be in the ROD and Section 404 permit. We are willing to discuss our concerns, comments, and recommendations with you. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our concerns and recommendations, please contact me at 312-353-1441 or Al Fenedick of my staff at either fenedick.al@epa.gov or 312-886-6872.

Sincerely yours,



Jerri-Anne Garl, Director
Office of Science, Ecosystems, and Communities

Samargia, Jim

Subject: FW: Mittal Steel East Pit Development

Attn: Scott Ek,

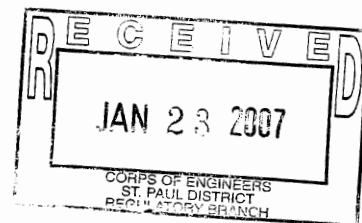
I am responding to the legal advertisement in the Mesabi Daily News 12-05-06, in regards to the proposed development of Mittal Steel (Inland Steel) East Mining reserve between Mckinley and Biwabik Mn.

I am a property owner on the Pike River between Mckinley and Biwabik and have concerns as to access to my property on County Rd.715 (AKA Whiskey Creek Road or Pike River Road.) I also have concerns with my property value.

Please advise,

Thank You

Jim Samargia
602 Dakota Ave
Gilbert Mn. 55741
cell 218-749-1514
(e-mail) jsamargia@cirrusdesign.com



1/17/2007